Ford Confers With Advisers On CIA Reform

By Robert Trautman
Reuter

President Ford met with his senior advisers yesterday to discuss reform of the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence-gathering agencies that have been sharply criticized for alleged widespread illegal activities.

The President has said he intends to reshape control and organization of the agencies after numerous documented reports that they had long engaged in unlawful operations and that the CIA had plotted the deaths of several foreign leaders.

The White House meeting was cloaked in uncommon secrecy, and afterward reporters were not even given an outline of the proceedings.

No deadline has been set for the intelligence changes, but it was thought some might be announced later this month.

Attending the meeting with Mr. Ford were Vice President Rockefeller, out-going CIA Director William E. Colby, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and James T. Lynn, director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Lynn's presence indicated that intelligence agency budgets were to be scrutinized. The budgets are closely held secrets, but the CIA alone is thought to spend more than $700 million annually.

Among the areas thought covered in the meeting was the need for tighter definition of an intelligence agency's powers, which some observers now feel are so loose that officials can bend them to justify almost any covert action.

Another topic believed discussed was reform of the line of command within the intelligence community and the White House, which authorizes many covert overseas operations.

Observers say all responsibility is purposely left hazy so that senior officials can disassociate themselves easily from operations that later come under criticism or that fail.

In addition to discussing the limits of powers and command responsibilities, the White House meeting was thought to have covered the organization of the agencies and what oversight Congress should have of foreign intelligence operations.

The meeting followed findings by two congressional investigating committees and a report by a special commission headed by Rockefeller that found the CIA had illegally spied on U.S. citizens.

JAMES T. LYNN
... among conferees

A Senate committee, headed by Frank Church (D-Idaho), issued an assassination report last autumn detailing CIA plots to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, former Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba and other foreign officials.

The committee will issue its full report later this year.

A House committee is also investigating intelligence-gathering agencies, including the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

Preliminary findings of the committees alleged that the abuses include opening citizens' mail, monitoring private telephone calls and telegrams and extensive infiltration by agents into American dissident organizations, especially those formed to oppose the Vietnam war.